Altissimo!
RECORDINGS
Across the Pond
50 EUROPEAN MARCHES

INTRODUCTION

Wind instruments and percussion have been utilized for military and ceremonial purposes going back to the age of antiquity. Over many centuries, instruments became more complex, ensembles grew in size, and musical needs and tastes evolved, all of which resulted in the development of the modern march. It was during the late nineteenth century that the march became viewed not only as a functional part of military and civil services, but also as music to be enjoyed, in concert halls and parades alike. It was during this golden age of the march that the core of the repertoire was composed.

But while Americans like Henry Fillmore, Karl King, and the "March King" himself, John Philip Sousa, are frequently used as mascots for the march, it is important to remember that our reverence for this genre has its origins in Europe, a place that generations of military musicians called home. It was through European military bands that the modern march came into maturity, and by the pens and batons of European bandmasters that an unfathomable amount of music was created.

On *Across the Pond,* we pay homage to this great period of music and to the people who tirelessly composed marches, often for their own bands.

This album is a journey, exploring the marches of nine European countries (and Australia), allowing the listener to hear the subtle differences between composers of different nationalities, even as they adhere to a standardized form. The recordings themselves are done by various bands of the United States military, and maintain a very classic band sound, reflecting the antiquity of these marches. This collection is march music in its purest form.

ENGLAND

Thomas Clark (1854 – 1943): During his early days in England, Thomas Clark quickly became proficient in music theory and composition, and learned to play several wind instruments, focusing primarily on the clarinet and the cornet. In his early twenties, he moved to The United States, and performed in various military bands as a cornetist. After settling in New York, Clark was hired as an arranger for G. Schirmer, where he would work for more than twenty years.

FRANCE

Gabriel Pares (1860 – 1934): Growing up in Paris, Gabriel Pares quickly rose to the top of the French music scene. He studied composition with Leo Delibes, won various prizes in cornet and harmony, and after entering the military service, was rapidly promoted to the leadership of the French Navy Band of Toulon, all by the age of twenty-three. As a professional bandleader, Pares directed only the greatest French bands in both foreign and domestic capacities, including the St. Louis Exposition in 1904. Along with his wealth of marches, Pares is also known for his transcriptions of orchestral works, and other original works for band.

Louis Ganne (1862 – 1923): Born in the Auvergne region of France, Louis Ganne was strongly attracted to musical study at a very young age. While at the Paris Conservatory, he studied composition with Jules Massenet, and organ with Cesar Franck. As a composer, Ganne wrote a wide variety of works, including operettas, ballets, waltzes, mazurkas, and of course, marches. He was also a popular conductor, starting out in the Parisian theatre scene, and eventually grew to host his own orchestral concert series.

Francis Popy (1874 – 1928): Francis Popy grew up in Lyon, France, where his father conducted a local orchestra. At the age of eighteen, he joined a military regiment in Paris, where he was allowed to finish his musical education at the conservatory whilst fulfilling his obligation to the military. Although he was quickly given the position of assistant band director, he did not remain in the French military for very long. Popy developed a strong reputation as a conductor, and wrote a massive repertoire of marches, ballets, waltzes, operettas, and suites.

Today, he is credited with over three hundred works for band and orchestra.

Gabriel Allier (1863 – 1924): As a child in Lyon, Gabriel Allier received a very extensive early music education. He was only twenty-four when he was appointed to assistant director of the French Army's band of the 37th regiment, his first position as a military musician. Allier would go on to lead many French military bands, retiring from the military in 1919. He would continue to conduct and write until his passing in 1924.

SPAIN

Mariano San Miguel (1880 – 1935): Born in Oñati, a small community in northern Spain, Mariano San Miguel aspired at a young age to be a professional clarinetist.

After studying at the National Conservatory in Madrid, he joined several Spanish bands and orchestras as either the first or solo clarinet. San Miguel is also credited with the founding of the *Harmonia Revista Musical*, a Spanish music publication journal. The firm focused on new works for band, including paso dobles and arrangements by San Miguel himself. Through his publication, new marches were promoted to bands in both Europe and The United States, even making its way to The United States Navy Band.

Santiago Lope Gonzalo (1871 – 1906): Santiago Lope Gonzalo grew up in a small village north of Madrid, where his mother discovered his natural aptitude for music. At the age of six, Gonzalo was already playing piccolo in the village band, and by fifteen, performing violin in Madrid's famous Apolo Theater Orchestra while attending school at the Royal Conservatory of Music. An accomplished performer, conductor, and composer, Gonzalo was widely recognized for his orchestration and instrumentation skills, often receiving requests from other composers to arrange their work for them.

GERMANY

Carl Teike (1864 – 1922): As a child growing up in Germany, Carl Teike quickly became proficient on several musical instruments. At the age of nineteen, he joined the 123rd Rifle Regiment band as a volunteer oboist. He remained in military bands for six years, leaving after a bandmaster suggested he throw one of his new, unnamed marches

in the fire. Ironically, that march, *Alte Kameraden*, would grow to be one of Teike's more famous works. After leaving the army, Teike became a police officer, and later, a post office worker, all while composing music on the side.

Leon Jessel (1871 – 1942): Unlike most march composers of this era, Leon Jessel's musical background was not in military bands. Jessel spent much of his career as musical director for various German operetta theaters, and eventually wrote a few operettas himself. His earliest successes were in writing character pieces such as *Parade of the Tin Soldiers* and *The Rose's Marriage Procession*. His military-style marches more closely resemble theater and incidental music, which was popular in Germany during the 1920's.

Hermann Blankenburg (1876 – 1956): Growing up in central Germany, it was expected that Hermann Blankenburg would eventually take over his father's role on the family farm. But, after pleading to his parents to let him attend a conservatory, they compromised and enrolled him into military music school, with the expectation that it would lead him to a career in civil service. Regardless, Blankenburg resigned from military service after two years. While employed as a bassoonist in various orchestras, he composed his first march *Deutschlands Fursten*, which made him very sought after as a composer. Over his long career of composing and conducting, Blankenburg wrote over one thousand marches.

Franz von Blon (1861 – 1945): A native Berliner, Franz von Blon was a renowned conductor and composer in operatic, symphonic, and band circles. He founded and directed the Wind Orchestra of the Berlin Philharmonic, conducted the Berlin Tonkünstler Orchestra, and was even a guest conductor for the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra. At twenty-six, he began to write music of his own, excelling in various media and sub-genres. He is only credited with thirty marches, but they each are expertly written and truly indicative of the style.

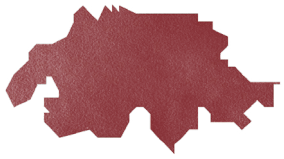
Carl Friedemann (1862 – 1952): Carl Friedemann was born in Mucheln, Germany, and studied music in Halle, Leipzig, Erfurt, and Berlin. Along with his impressive repertoire of one hundred and forty military marches, Friedemann is well known for his orchestral output including string quartets, overtures, and even symphonies. In 1912, after years of directing German military bands and being appointed Royal Director of Music, he

moved to Switzerland where he directed a local municipal band, orchestra, and a male choir. He also established his own music publishing business in Switzerland, and eventually his own music school.

Hermann Silwedel (1877 – 1936): There is virtually no information available about Herman Silwedel's youth, save for his birthplace; an area called Hohenwalde in eastern Germany. It is probable that he performed in a band whilst serving in the German military. In 1900, Silwedel founded his own publishing house called the *Landsberger Musikverlag*, which was designed to serve the numerous civilian bands active at the time. Using his own company for distribution, his compositions became very popular in bands across the country, but never became associated with the military bands.

SWITZERLAND

Gian Battista Mantegazzi (1889 – 1958): Gian Battista Mantegazzi was born in southern Switzerland, near the Italian border. During World War I, he served as a trumpeter in the Tessinar Battalion Band. Afterwards, he studied at the Conservatory of Balogna, where he specialized in band music. He would remain in Italy for a time, serving as the director of the Giuseppe Verdi School of Music. When he moved back to Switzerland, Mantegazzi lead a municipal band in Shaffhausen, and won the highly coveted position of Director of Stadtmusik in Zurich, where he would remain until his death.



AUSTRIA

Josef Franz Wagner (1856 – 1908): Born in Vienna, Josef Franz Wagner is known as the "Austrian March King." The son of a doctor, he studied music in his youth before entering the military service, where, at twenty-two, he became bandmaster of the 47th Infantry Regiment in Trient. Wagner remained with this band for fourteen years, and toured with it throughout Austria. In 1892, feeling drawn to his hometown of Vienna, Wagner left his prestigious post to join a more local military band, where he became immensely popular among the Viennese people. Then, after twenty-one years of service, he left the military to form his own band, which through him became equally popular in Vienna.

Karel Komzak II (1850 – 1905): Karel Komzak II is the second in a line of three composers with the

same name, each of which received considerable popularity during their respective times. He first studied music with his father, and would later attend Prague Conservatory of Music. After a brief period of performance in his father's orchestra as a violinist, Komzak became bandmaster of an Austrian military band. He would remain in the service of military bands for more than twenty years before retiring to the spa town of Baden, just south of Vienna, where he became the conductor of the spa orchestra. Komzak died somewhat abruptly in 1905 after slipping and falling onto a train track, but his name continued to live on through his son, composer Karel Komzak III.

HUNGARY

Franz Lehar (1870 – 1948): Franz Lehar was born in Komarom, west of Budapest, in Hungary. A majority of his success lies in the more than thirty operettas to his credit, many of which received international popularity during his time. However, in his earlier career, Lehar conducted several military bands after

finishing his education at the Prague Conservatory. He directed several bands stationed in Pola, Trieste, Budapest, and Vienna, and it is likely during this time that he composed most of his military marches.

ITALY

Giuseppe Manente (1867 – 1941):

Native to Guglionesi di Campobasso, in southern Italy near its eastern coast, Giuseppe Manente began his musical career as a solo contralto in his father's church choir, where his father fostered his natural talents. In his youth, Manente studied harmony and trumpet under many different teachers, eventually bringing him to the Conservatory of San Pietro at Magella in Naples. In 1889, he entered the military, and won the position of head musician of the 60th Regiment in Novara. His band became known as one of the greatest in all of Italy. During his career as a bandmaster, Manente also lead the Banda della Guardia di Finanza, a well-known Italian band, and also the private band of King Fuad of Egypt.

Gerardo Iasilli (1880 – 1969): In 1904, after studying at the Institute Musicale in Avigliano, Italy, and conducting a band lead by Silvio Mancini, Gerardo Iasilli immigrated to America. He was world-renowned for his abilities on saxophone, performing with famous orchestras like the New

York Philharmonic and the Philadelphia Orchestra. He joined Giuseppe Creatore's band upon arriving in America, and was quickly appointed assistant bandmaster of the group. Iasilli did not produce a large output of marches during his lifetime, but is better known for his numerous arrangements done for Carl Fischer and other music publishers.

SWEDEN

Viktor Widqvist (1881 – 1952): Born in Stockholm, Viktor Widqvist joined the Swedish military at the age of seventeen, entering the band of the Royal Svea Engineers. A decade later, he graduated from the Royal College of Music, and would go on to perform in various orchestras as chief violinist. Then, in 1922, he began to direct the band of the Royal Gota Engineers in Karlsborg, a position he maintained for thirty years, and likely when he wrote much of his march repertoire.

Per Berg (1897 – 1957): Per (Peter) Berg was born in the Dalecarlia province of Sweden, northwest of Stockholm. At the young age of fifteen, he entered the 13th Infantry Regiment of the Swedish Army. He would later join the Royal Gota Life Guards band in Stockholm, and during his tenure would study clarinet and French horn at the Royal College of Music. He spent a majority of his life conducting in many Swedish military bands, dedicating his life to military service.

AUSTRALIA

Alex Lithgow (1870 – 1929): Although known as an Australian composer, Alex Lithgow was born in Glasgow, Scotland, and was six years old when his family emigrated to Invercargill, New Zealand. At only eleven, he was admitted into the Invercargill Garrison Band, where he became the principal cornetist after five years, and the bandleader after nine. Lithgow's first march, *Invercargill*, was originally rejected by his publisher, but received sweeping success after giving it to his brother, who conducted his band shortly after he had left it. Unfortunately, much of Lithgow's work was lost after being sent to a German printer just before the outbreak of World War I. Unable to support himself exclusively through his music, Lithgow would spend his days working at a newspaper printer, and would write his music when he returned home at night.

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CREDITS

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